of contemporary relationships. The family system does not mean only family life, or a set of obligations, or a family. It is all of these, and, in addition, a historical continuity. It is an institution in which the past is constantly intruding on the present and in which the present is a combination of acts to secure one's own livelihood and well-being as well as to perpetuate the family in the future. A simple illustration will make this clear. One of the obligations of living members of a family is to observe the death anniversaries of close relatives. The last, the most important, and the most sumptuous of these observances occurs on the 33d year after the death of the relative who is mourned. Thus a grandson, most likely the first son of a first son, may end this period of memorial observances for a grandfather whom he may never have seen. There is a constant intrusion of obligations coming from the past. These, often onerous and expensive, are honored in a positive manner.

In the present, conscious plans are made for the continuance of the family. These are achieved through three closely inter-related devices: the succession of the first son to his father's house and, on his marriage, taking up residence at the father's home, the system of inheritance which favors the first son, and the establishment of branch households for other sons, awarding them, if the family's wealth permits, a house site and fields for cultivation.

In this way, the continuance of the main line and collateral branches of the family is provided for. If we pursue the illustration of inheritance a little further, we can think of the division of the land as an expression of the family system applied to the use and to the sharing of the available natural resources. The system of agriculture, the scattered ownership of small holdings, the attempts at land conservation and reclamation are best understood as reflections of duties and obligations to the present and future generations in the family system. If they are not seen in this way, they may appear to be isolated practices best discussed as techniques or as aspects of law and custom.

Not only in family observances but in public holidays as well, the subtle influences of the family system can be observed. Public holidays and festivals are centered on two main themes, sometimes both together: thanksgiving for good crops and reverence for those who have passed away. The holiday of O-Bon in the seventh lunar month, in which the departed dead are invited to return for a visit to the homes of their living descendants and the celebrations at lunar New Year are good examples of this.

In village life, the family system is strengthened by the high incidence of intermarriage among local kinship groups. A general lack of mobility in the villages studied has also led to the increase of immediate relatives living in the same village. This lends to community, and even to local government some of the characteristics of a wider family life. The establishment of branch families in the village of their parent

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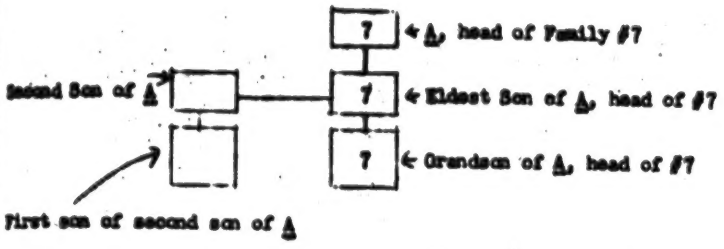
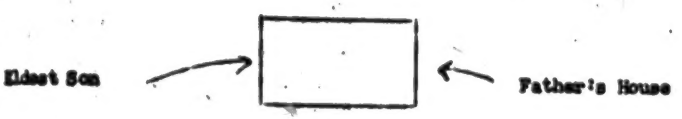
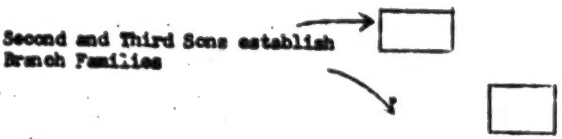
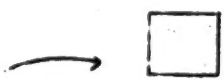






Daughters marry and go to Husband's Father's House or to Branch Families established by their husbands.



[591]

The family system, through the succession of the first son to his father's house, prevents the extinction of the main family line, and at the same time creates branch families with close ties with the parent family.

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Lacking a son, adoption (to be discussed below) is available to provide against extinction of any family, but in Okinawan villages it has seldom been necessary to use it.

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The emphasis in the family system is on providing for the eldest son who succeeds to the father's estate. The sons other than the first must be prepared to accept little or nothing, in the case of the very poor, when they marry and separate themselves from the parental house.

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In these Okinawan villages, the second and succeeding sons (or younger brothers if the head of the house is the eldest brother) remain in the family until marriage, usually around 25. They do not live in separate houses, but may have separate rooms, or a small shack in the compound for sleeping purposes. Unless they live in another town or work

tered in the villages--a first son may be passed over in favor of a second son because of mental disability, gross incompetence, or excessive drinking, or the father, by selling his land to his other sons may in effect disinherit his first son. These actions involve the courts and it is rare for villagers to engage in litigation. In practice, the first son almost invariably succeeds. On his marriage, the first son and his wife live in the home of his parents. There are some exceptions to this. Since the war, some first sons in agricultural communities have found opportunities in business in Naha, in larger towns like Itoman or Nago, in military government or in Okinawan government positions. In this case, the first son does not live with his parents, but he continues with this new work in the strange town, the parents on their retirement, or as they become more helpless, joining the son. But in cases where the first son continues in the occupation of his father, this is the usual and expected practice. Only long standing incompatability between father and son prevents such an arrangement.

One point regarding the future of the family system that may assume importance in Okinawa is that the responsibilities of the first son increase with any decline in opportunities for succeeding sons. The traditional outlet for sons other than the first in Oriental countries has been migration to the cities, to lands of new settlement, or emigration to foreign countries. In Okinawa, emigration to various parts of the world, the South Seas, Hawaii, Peru, Brazil has been the most important of these outlets. Its history cannot be understood without appreciating this fact. Both first and succeeding sons have emigrated. With the virtual stoppage of emigration, the only solution for second and succeeding sons would seem to lie in opportunities coming from military installations, government work, industrial and urban development, in addition to the present opportunities in agriculture. If with a growing population, the family system begins to break apart, it will probably be first noticed in the inability of the first sons to bear increased responsibilities.

For this reason, it is interesting to record some observed attitudes of first and other sons in the villages studied. These attitudes are personal ones. No inter-village comparisons can be made. The first is one of pride in being a first son and in assuming the headship of the house but dislike of the responsibility of providing for siblings, especially when the estate is not large. Dislike of the responsibilities of being the first son was most observable in Minatogawa. Here the lack of land, succession merely to a house site, a boat or fishing gear, but with the same responsibility for care for younger brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents put the clearest burden on the first son. The financial burden of paying for anniversary celebrations on the death of a relative is especially onerous. There is only minor help from younger brothers. This fact is not resented as a lack of generosity of the younger brothers who by now would have branch houses of their own; it is part of the family system. Younger brothers might contribute, as one first son jokingly said, fifty yen to a celebration that cost two thousand.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

1

The Family System, Inheritance, and Succession

The family system is distinct from the inheritance of property. But in the succession of the first son to the house and in the establishment of branch families, the operation of the family system shows its effects on the practices involved in the inheritance of land and other property.

The family system can, and actually has operated in Okinawa independently of a system of private ownership in land, and, at present its obligations are as strong on a landless villager as on one who has many fields or other property. Succession in the family system is succession to a series of rights and duties and responsibilities, much watered down, it is true, from what they once were. These rights and duties may involve the disposition of rice fields, a house site, or personal and movable property, such as the majority of Hinatogawa fishermen possess in a boat, nets, hooks, and other fishing equipment.

Since agriculture and the employment of land are fundamental to the life and economy of Okinawan villages, practices involving the inheritance of land should receive the greatest emphasis. In this chapter, land is considered in a general way, reserving for the following chapter a detailed analysis of types and grades of land based on the Okinawan township system of land classification.

Since the first son and his succession to the house are so important to the continuity of the family, one might expect outright primogeniture in inheritance of real property. Such is not the case. The present system of inheritance of property was defined in Japanese law which provided for inheritance by sons other than the first and by daughters as well. This is based on Japanese law as it stood prior to the passage and promulgation of the Japanese land reform law of October 1946 and prior to the post-war revisions of the Japanese Civil Code.[1]

1 In this and in the following chapters, words in parentheses are, unless otherwise designated, Japanese equivalents of English terms. For an interesting historical discussion of the concepts of katoku-sōzoku (succession to house headship) and isan sōzoku (succession to property), see Hozumi, Nobushige, Ancestor worship and Japanese law. Third and revised edition, Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto, 1913, 170-87, esp. 181-82. Hozumi notes that in old Chinese history, katoku (house authority) was used as a synonym for eldest son, 172-73. On the Japanese reforms following the war, see Arthur F. Raper et al., The Japanese village in transition, (GHQ, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Natural Resources Section Report No. 136), Tokyo, 1950, 161-70, 258-61, and Laurence I. Hewes Jr., Japanese Land Reform Program (GHQ, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Natural Resources Section Report No. 127), Tokyo, 1950, 9-36.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

428 592 There is a distinction between succeeding to the headship of a house and inheriting property which the head of a house may possess. In the first case, the first son assumes the direction of the family; in the second, he receives property which will enable him to do this. This old distinction is still maintained.

[171] One of the striking differences between post-war Japan and its former province in the Ryukyus is that in the latter inheritance and succession were left untouched, while in Japan a thorough going revision of traditional laws and customs completely altered the system of inheritance and, in effect, abolished the operation of the family system in matters of land tenure and inheritance.[2]

428 In present day Okinawa, property, real or personal, may be passed from father to sons, or daughters, in the absence of sons, in two ways: by personal disposition of the property on his retirement, or by division of the property on the father's death. In either case, the function of inheritance in the culture is to insure, by a system of preferential inheritance in favor of the first son, or his successor, the maintenance of the family house on its site, of the family estate in land, and at the same time, to provide either during the father's lifetime or after his death, sufficient property given before or at marriage, to enable younger sons to establish branch houses. This property given to sons other than the first, includes a house site (yashiki, takuchi) arable dry land (hatake) and the non-arable but highly useful genya land. These dispositions parallel the distinctions between a main family (honke) and its branch family (bunke).

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Parallels Between the Family System and Inheritance of Land

Family System	Inheritance
First son becomes head of the house on death or retirement of the father.	First son inherits the family house site and has preferential status in obtaining other parcels of land.
Second and other sons establish branch households on marriage.	Second and other sons receive from the father, or elder brother, a house site, a paddy field, dry crop land, or genya land, if available

The first son by remaining in the home of his parents keeps at least part of the family estate (zaisan) within the main family, with the hope that sufficient lands will be left over to insure the well-being of the branch families that spring from it.

2 For some Japanese reactions to the new system, see The Japanese village in transition, as cited, 211-12.

428 [562] [583]

Daughters are not considered in inheritance matters if there are male heirs. A daughter's share of family possessions normally comes to her as a marriage present: a kimono, a chest, a mirror, a pillow, and a quilt-like blanket (futon), and other personal articles, or money, depending on the economic abilities of the father. In the absence of male heirs, women (either as wives or daughters) can and do inherit the house and property. In a family without sons, the head has several alternatives: he may allow the daughter to inherit, or adopt a bridegroom for his own house, the first distasteful to the father because there is no one to continue the family line, the second distasteful to the groom who must desert his own family. A third alternative is to adopt a young male child of a relative. [597]

The passing down of property in these villages is governed in large part also by custom and the individual desire of the parents. In the villages, there were no instances of which I knew in which disputes over inheritance and the disposition of property had been carried to court for settlement. Quarrels among a father and his sons or the first sons and his younger brothers are said to be rather common. Much depends on the temperament and the generosity of the first son who controls the property on the death or retirement of his father. The problem was often put in this way: the first son must look after his younger brothers and give them land, but he must also keep his eye on the estate he will be able to pass down to his own children. [692] [578]

2

Essentials of the Inheritance System.

The essentials of the inheritance system, as it was found to be working in these villages, were substantially the same. (1) In the division of property on the death or retirement of the father (or the head of the house), the house site itself is never divided. The family residence, the buildings in the compound remain intact. The house is a symbol of a family's existence and its future. If it is also the main house of the extended family, it is the site of the original founder and is even more inviolate.

An interesting question arises when the first sons are male twins. An old practice, now abandoned, was that the second of the twins inherited as the first son. This was based on a belief that the last child out of the womb was the first one in, and therefore the older. In the villages, one still hears this explanation from older people, but now the universal practice is for the first born to become the first son.

(2) The rest of the property is divided, in varying proportions, among the remaining sons. The first son gets the money, but he is expected to share this. He normally gets at least half the property, the remaining half being divided up among the other sons, either in the

428 form of fields or of house sites so they may establish branch families.

(3) The inheritance and the division of land cannot be considered abstractly. It is in this area that custom and individual desire have the greatest play. A village farmer does not simply have land. Normally he has a series of scattered land holdings, varying in area, type, and productivity. A farmer does not have a compact area of rice or sweet potato land which can be easily subdivided, but a few small rice plots, of varying grade, some fields for growing sugar cane, sweet potatoes, or vegetables--also of varying grades--and parcels of genya land from which he gets firewood, grass for his thatched roof, or feed for his animals. When speaking of inheritance and division of land, one should think in concrete terms of the various types and grades of land subject to disposition. Under these circumstances, it is meaningless to say that an Okinawan farmer has an average of so many acres of land unless we are prepared also to add its category of productivity or use. The mechanics of land division are therefore directly related to land use and to the fragmentation of land.

[311]

(4) There is a tendency to give the second and other sons the scattered holdings and to subdivide these parcels if they are large enough, preserving the land closer to the house site or parcels that adjoin one another for the head of the house.

(5) Generally speaking, the first son does not subdivide a specific parcel of land with his brothers. He will take a whole piece as his own, leaving other parcels to be subdivided among his brothers.

425 (6) Inherited land can be sold, but the customarily approved reasons for doing so are few. This applies with special force to the holdings of the first son. Property can be disposed of without the sale being considered dishonorable when it is associated with a change of occupation involving moving to another place, or with acute economic distress. A man who decides to give up farming and to move his family to the city may sell his land; a man who is physically unable to work his land and has no children of sufficient age to help him may sell his land and set up a village store; a widow with minor children, already in debt, may sell her property. Sellers consult with the members of the extended family who live in the same or in nearby villages and only sell with the consent and advice of these relatives. This is conspicuously true of widows.

509 (7) If the first son dies without issue, he is replaced by the second son who becomes head of a house. If the first son is in a foreign country, the second son at home lives in the house, but this does not endanger the succession rights of the first son abroad. If the first son returns, he succeeds to his house, and the second or other sons living in the house will be obliged to set up a branch family. Occasionally, a second son remains in the main family, even though he cannot succeed to the house; this is during the minority of a deceased elder brother's first son who will take over the house when he is of age.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

(8) Inheritance practices tend toward a slow but continuous fragmentation of land due to the need of establishing branch households. This tendency toward fragmentation is seldom overcome by reversing the process in favor of some form of land consolidation. The major obstacles to consolidation will be dealt with in the next chapter. Fragmentation is more likely to occur in the holdings of the more well-to-do who have property to divide. Among the very poor, whose holdings are small and scattered, there is an enforced primogeniture. It is not possible to divide land indefinitely. The smaller a piece of land, the more likely it will be surrounded by land owned by others, and these isolated islands are difficult either to sell or trade.

(9) Among the fishermen of Hinatogawa, practices applied to real, personal, and movable property, are similar to those of the agricultural villages (nōson). Here the influence of the family system is more on the disposition of personal than of real property, but the effects, if not the rewards, are similar. If a fisherman has dry crop fields--there is no rice land--the elder son receives all, or most of the land. All informants stressed the weight of the individual desire of the father, whose division of property is influenced by the spirit, sobriety, and dependability of his sons. Here there is also the same social disapproval of selling inherited land. The fishermen attempt to supply second sons with small boats, nets, hooks, and other gear, just as the farmer attempts to give land, domestic animals, and agricultural tools. With the very poor, second and third sons may have to be content with nothing or with a few articles of clothing. Among those fishermen who have land, the principle is established that the first son gets the greater part, if not all, of the real property.

3

Mechanics of Land Division

Ownership is scattered; individuals own different types of land in varying proportions and in varying grades within types. Plots of land are small in area. Rice plots are normally the smallest, followed in general in ascending order by dry crop fields, and the wild land (genya). It is from such conditions as these that the difficulties in fairness of division arise.

The following illustrations show the manner in which division is usually carried out. Let us for simplicity first assume four parcels of land:

#1, a house site
#2, a parcel of 700 tsubo third grade dry crop land (hatake)
#3, 500 tsubo of grade one dry crop land, inconvenient and far away from the home, and
#4, 1000 tsubo of grade two hatake.

428 A possible distribution is shown in the following diagram. (Fig. 1). In this arrangement, the first son gets the house site and parcel #1. The second son gets 600 tsubo of the 700 tsubo in parcel #2. The third son gets 600 tsubo in two different places, 100 from parcel #2 and all of parcel #3.

423 311 Now let us take a more complicated situation, one that more closely parallels an actual division. The land of the head of the house is distributed in the following plots:

#1 19 tsubo of first grade rice land. This is a minute holding, roughly equivalent to a rectangle 20' x 34'. The fact that it is first class paddy and very small indicates that it is a rice seed bed (naidoko).

#2, 3, 4 are parcels of rice land, second grade, of 150 tsubo each.

#5 A plot of 3d grade rice land, 300 tsubo.

#6 A plot of 150 tsubo of dry farm land (hatake). This is first grade, but far from the house and in a different area from other family holdings.

#7 One plot of 2d grade dry farm land, 350 tsubo of medium quality but close in.

#8 A plot of 500 tsubo of dry farm land, 4th grade, hence rather poor, but close to the house.

#9 A plot of 400 tsubo dry farm land, 5th grade and barely usable for cultivation, almost like genya land.

428 423 The possible distribution is shown in Fig. 2. In this arrangement, the first son gets the house site, the seed bed (#1) and the three nearby rice fields (#2,3,4), the 500 tsubo of 4th grade dry crop land (#8), and the 350 tsubo of grade 2 dry crop land (#7). The second son receives 150 tsubo of rice land through the subdivision of plot #5, 150 tsubo of first grade dry crop land (#6), and one-half of the 400 tsubo of fifth grade dry crop land (#9). The third son gets the second half of the rice plot (#5), and the second half of the dry crop land (#9).

Summarized, the totals are:

	Total Tsubo*	Rice (Ta)	Dry Crop Land (Hatake)
Total	2169	769	1400
First Son	1319	469	850
Second Son	500	150	350
Third Son	350	150	200

[809] * A tsubo is about four square yards

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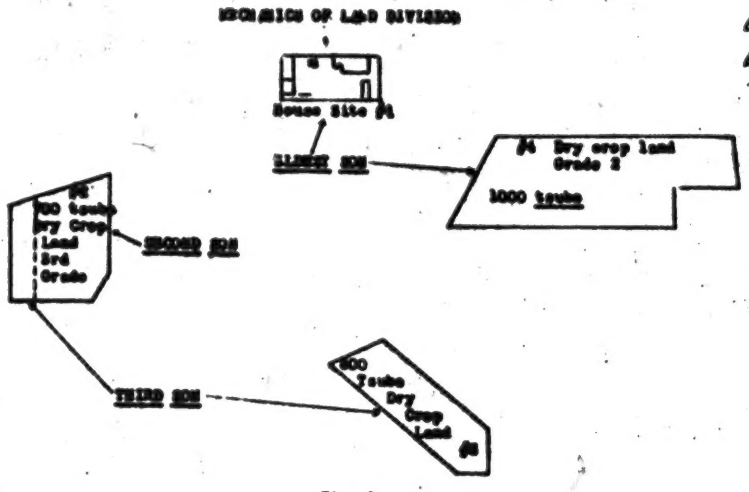

Fig. 1

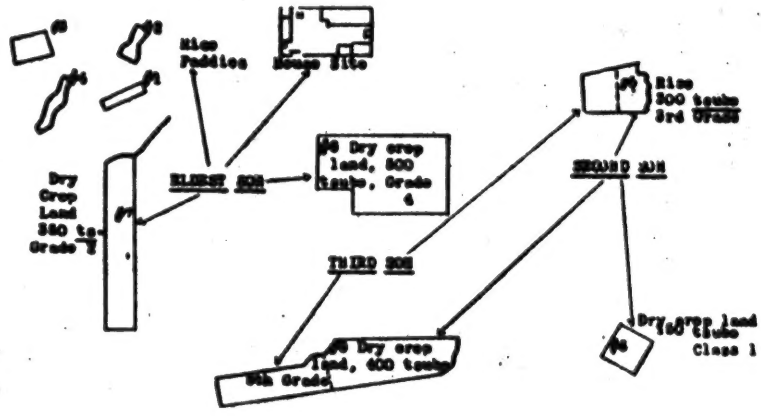

Fig. 2

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In this illustration, the first son receives slightly over 60% of the land, ignoring type and grade within type. There was general agreement [292] in all villages that the grade of land within each classification (grades 1 to 4 in dry crop land, for example) had little significance in inheritance matters. The grade is more important for tax purposes. [651]

The example also illustrates two other principles: the natural desire to keep contiguous or close in land within the main family, using inconvenient or far off land where possible for house sites for branch families, or for arable land for second and other sons. In this illustration, the shares of the second and of the third sons could be equalized by subdividing plot #6, although its small area would not make it worth while, as 75 tsubo is a very low average size for dry crop land. [241]

Another practice, noted in Hanashiro and in Matsuda, is that the first son receives everything on the retirement of the father. This may be contrasted with a situation in which the father divides the property before younger sons marry and establish branch families. In such cases, the father might take the income from part of the property. But the more general practice is for the father to give all to the first son. Fathers may also make a will. When the first son receives all, it is the custom for him to hold property which the younger sons will need in establishing their branch families. It is in cases where the first son is given full disposition of the property that quarrels are most likely to occur, for much depends on the generosity and sense of fairness of the elder brother.[3] [593]

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In Hanashiro and Minatogawa, it is important that younger brothers receive genya land. Genya is often translated as wild land. In Japan the term is usually used to describe treeless, waste, hilly, rocky, or rolling land unsuitable for cultivation. In Okinawa, the genya land may be in the center of a rice field; it may be a rocky mound with cultivation around it. It may be land in the mountains. It is almost invariably in grass (miscanthus) with an occasional cycad or scrub pine. [137] It is not owned in large tracts. In Hanashiro, the largest single parcel [423] is 4564 tsubo (3.77 acres), in Minatogawa 1333 (tsubo) (1.9 acres), and in Matsuda 6398 tsubo (5.28 acres), but these are far above the average. In Hanashiro it is important because grass is constantly needed for [824] thatched roofs and other uses. The importance of genya and its grass was well illustrated in Minatogawa after the typhoon, Ruth, of October [731] 13-14, 1951. These villagers own little land and many have no genya. [432] They were obliged to buy the grass to replace the roofs of many of the frailer houses which had been partially or completely destroyed by the typhoon. Genya is also used for family tombs. In Hanashiro, the genya [764]

[Text continues TOP of P. 133--Analyst]

3 The problem can be appreciated by analyzing the acreage areas of each classification of land and the grades within it, bearing in mind that the average farmer has hatake, genya, and often rice paddies. These statistics will be given in the following chapter.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

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[824] In Hanashiro, The genya grass and shrub are essential as a substitute for firewood. In Matsuda with large areas of community owned forest, this genya is not so important to the individual family.

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311 In considering the inheritance of land, it is essential to understand that a family needs different types of land. Not everyone has rice paddies, but parcels of dry crop land and genya in the south are necessary to existence.

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593 If the practices of these three villages are indicative of the division of family holdings in general, the first son obtains between 50% and 60% of the land in addition to the house site. The remainder is divided, often equally, among the other sons. In the poorer families, if the sons are widely spaced, there may be enough left over for the second son, but when the third son reaches marriageable age, there may be nothing for him. Instances of this type were observed in the villages. One young farmer of Hinatogawa, a third son, said he received nothing, and set out by himself, first through wages, and then through small purchases to acquire his present modest land holdings.

This discussion may suggest a greater rigidity in the system of inheritance than is actually the case. It may give the impression of a series of families headed by the first son with most of the property and with younger sons and their branch families struggling along on what land can be spared for them. There has been, for historical reasons, more fluidity than this. The large number of heads of families who themselves are not first sons indicates that many second to fifth sons as well as daughters ultimately come into control of a family estate.

There have been four main reasons for this. (1) Emigration of first sons before they became of age. They left to earn a living in foreign countries to support their parents in the villages, became established and postponed to an indefinite future their return to Okinawa. Since the end of the war, according to relatives who are living in the village, many of these have no intention of ever returning except to visit. (2) Deaths of first sons without issue, and the succession of other sons or daughters. (3) Heavy war losses, especially of males. Some of these naturally were first sons, opening the way for the succession of young widows or second sons in the case of the unmarried first sons. (4) Deaths from catastrophes like typhoons, and in the case of Hinatogawa, the losses of fishermen at sea.

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182 Inheritance practices with private ownership of land follow logically from the family system. They are a means of providing the economic base by saving the estate for future generations, at the same time providing where possible for sons not in the direct line of succession. Inheritance is a connecting link between the family system and land use and land tenure. Present land use and land tenure are an interesting example of the modifications that a system of social organization, the family system, has made on the natural environment.

179 423 have been affected by roads and trails which have now disappeared.

[115] Old residents[5] of Matsuda and neighboring villages were able to furnish more specific clues regarding the old system and its relation to other phases of village life. These old people estimated the [161] population of Matsuda at the close of the old system at about 360 persons, compared with the present population of 1368. The system operated under much less acute population pressure than exists today. [165] Deaths, especially from malaria, and a high infant mortality kept the population down, although introduced Japanese hygienic measures helped.

[311] Under the old system in Matsuda, there was a continual clearing of land, mostly around the settlement. There seems little doubt that land reclamation and clearing has been going on slowly from the earliest historical times in Okinawa. The land cleared remained under village ownership, but the persons who cleared the property were allowed to hold it for use without giving it up for periodic redistribution. Technical ownership remained with the village.[6] Fences and stone barriers were erected as a protection against the wild boar. But the large scale reclamation and the private ownership of genya land seems to have occurred after the close of the old system.

The dividion of lands at the beginning of the new system has set the boundary pattern of many plots. In Matsuda there were instances of land which has retained the same boundaries that it had under the old system. There was general agreement among the old that the form, boundaries, and areas of land plots have changed very little since the times of the jiwari-seido. This would be par- [428] ticularly true in the case of property which had passed down through [425] the first son. Changes came from the establishment of branch families, and sales and purchases. In these areas, however, buying and selling have been infrequent.

195 423 [171] The history of land tenure in Okinawa, therefore, is different from that of Japan with its long history of tenancy, whose accumulated problems finally led to the land reform of 1946 during the Allied occupation. The present system of land tenure in Okinawa is a little over 50 years old.

178 423 311 The chief influences of the old system were to set in a form recognizable to the present, the pattern of land holding, to establish land classification, and apply it on a very localized basis.

[115] 5 I am indebted here to Shinzato Zensuke of the village of Sokei (Ginoza-son), and to Oshiro-san of Matsuda village (Ginoza-son) both over 70 years of age for their recollections of the history of the system in Matsuda.

[114] 6 This differs from Goldschmidt's account, cited above, in that in this case the land became a usufruct, in the other actual ownership.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

Every parcel of land with its grade and type is mapped, a thoroughness in land classification which has not yet been approached in the United States. While the mapping is recent, the information was always available in the village records. Village owned lands are also a survival of this system, especially the forests in the north. Community owned property is much more modest in area in the south and confined to small parcels of forest or pre-war forest, school and public building sites, community ponds, and the like.

2

Present Land Tenure and Land Classification

The present method of land holding based on Japanese law went into effect at the end of the old land allotment system. The head of the family registered all lands, previously held as shares, in his own name. Apparently in the last distribution before the abandonment of the old system, men and women over 52 years of age received their property for life with the right to pass it on to their children. At the beginning of the new system, also, the wild land was still publicly held, but further clearing and reclamation got under way, and the genya land also began to be divided up and became part of private holdings about ten years after the new land law went into effect.

The new system of private ownership of land introduced buying and selling (baibai), tenancy (kosaku), and land speculation. There had been some tenancy under the old system apparently however it was on a village basis with one community renting from another. There has therefore been insufficient time to develop in Okinawa the widespread abuses associated with the Japanese land tenure system prior to the land reform of 1946.[7]

In all the villages studied, individual ownership is the rule with some informal tenancy. How an owner is not paid for the use of his land, the result of a Civil Administration measure to encourage maximum food production. Tenancy, as it was observed in the villages was usually an informal lending of the land: the use by a friend, relative, or neighbor of an unused plot.

The present system of land use and land tenure is a result of practices and customs developed under the old allotment system, combined with the introduced Japanese system of inheritance. The family system plus these two influences have brought about the modern customs of land inheritance, the distinctions in types of land, and the fragmentation and lack of contiguity in holdings.

7 Based on conversations with villagers in Hatsuda. Uyehara, Yukuo made the same point in accounting for the low percentage of tenancy and the high percentage of independent farmers in Okinawa-ken, Ryukyu Islands, Japan. Economic Geography 9 (1933), 395-405. Reference on 399.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

5

Conclusion

The sources of the present land tenure and land use practices are to be sought in the old land allotment system. The original fragmentation of land was due to the land classification based in turn on the fact that excellent, good, and poor lands were not in one area, but were scattered. Further fragmentation has come from land division because of the establishment of branch families. With each generation a further fragmentation will take place. The present system of land tenure and of land use is to be explained, therefore, as a result of the ancient family system working first within the framework of the old allotment system, and then within the introduced Japanese system of inheritance, with practices of land use retaining some of the influences of the old.

The experience of the next few years in Japan will be interesting to observe. With equal inheritance for each child, will there be a hopeless splintering of land or land speculation in the sale of small holdings? Before any changes are made in the present Okinawan inheritance laws, the possible effects on land use and agriculture should be studied. Considerations should not be confined to a legalistic or sociological approach to the family itself. Besides of what value to the heirs would splintered, minute, and fragmented holdings be?

necessities of life. Fishermen are more accustomed to dealing in currency transactions and these are more frequent and freer than in the farming village. 434 511 184 [437]

The economic history of the average Okinawan agricultural village from the late 19th century when Japanese control became firm to the present is largely an account of the fluctuations in rice, sweet potato and sugar cane production. This history is difficult to reconstruct on a local level because of the destruction of records and inexact memories. The point is nevertheless worth making, if only to stress again that these villages are not isolated rural economies. The general experience seems to have been that crop acreages have contracted and expanded in response to local needs and to the demands of trade with Japan. 433 [439]

In the Hanashiro area, to use one example, there is a current interest in rice production because of its high value, and sugar cane seems to be displacing some sweet potato acreage. Sugar, even though coarse and unrefined, has a market in Japan strong enough to warrant production for the cash income at the expense of the cheap and plentiful sweet potato. 433 435

One of the most significant facts of economic life in these villages has been the maintenance of individual farms and crop variety. Plantation monoculture, subject to international price fluctuations and often conducive to local impoverishment, has not developed. 423 311

Private ownership in land, the inheritance of land within the family system, individual farms, tiny as they are, have undoubtedly been a stabilising influence on these village economies. 423 428

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

Survivals of the Priestess (Noro) System

The origin of the priestess system has been traced to primitive fire or hearth worship. A woman was a priestess to the God of Fire (hi no kami) represented in the hearth stone. A set of three rather long stones sometimes set in a triangle often represented the hearth. (These stones in the place of the guardian gods of the village may have the same meaning. In the poorer kitchens, stones set in this manner for the hearth are common to this day). In every house there was a primitive hearth (kamdo). "Here, before this hearth, the ancestors of the household are worshipped, the Fire coming to summarize the ancestors who have sat before the hearth in past generations."[3] Each household of a village, each village, and each township had a hearth attendant. The priestess (noro) of the whole township "represents the original worship of the predominant hearth of that region." The duties of the rural priestesses included worshipping at the ancestral shrines, deciding the lucky days for planting, and officiating at marriage and burial ceremonies.

This priestess system was made an institutionalised state religion by King Shō Shin (1477-1526). Their political power was broken by Shōsoku, a prime minister of King Shō Tei (1669-1709). The most logical explanation offered for their fall from political power is the influence of Confucianism with its standards of male dominance and the subordination of women. By the end of the 17th century, its economic and political power were declining, but its influence on individual worship, especially, in rural Okinawa, lasted down to the beginning of the recent war.[4]

The priestess system had a place in inheritance customs of the old land tenure system. "Under the ancient system," said Spencer, "certain valuable farm lands were the possession of the Noro, the remainder of the land being held by the community and reassigned at various periods."[5] Inheritance within the system insured the handing down of these properties in the female line. This succession could be accomplished in a number of ways. The female child of the brother of a priestess might succeed her. This is believed to be the method of succession in ancient times. In later times, the noro married and succession was traced in the male line. The wife of a son of the priestess,

3 This material is based on the article of R. S. Spencer, Noro or Priestesses of Loo-Choo, as cited. The quotation is on p. 97.

4 Ibid, 98, 108.

5 Ibid, 109. The material following is to be found on p. 110.

793 or her granddaughter might succeed her. In earlier times, priestesses
423 were unmarried. But with private ownership in land the fields owned by
428 the priestess were divided according to the new laws and fell into possession of the priestess' family.

793 Spencer pointed out in his discussion of their status in 1931 that
[791] they still had considerable influence. There was one in practically every village, although they were losing out to the female fortune tellers (yuta). Spencer cited the case of the principal of the primary school at Itoman who could get controversial plans adopted readily if a priestess sponsored them. This was over 30 years after the abolition of the old allotment system, and their economic power had vanished. But they were important figures in festivals and holidays. Their private services included advice and prayer on journeys and business undertakings. This brief summary of their past history will make the discussion that follows clearer.

793 The Japanese discouraged the priestess system, regarding it as a
178 superstition. In the years immediately preceding the war, the priestesses seem to have prospered more in the northern district of Okinawa. By 1951, the noros were virtually forgotten, victims of a long decline, Japanese discouragement, the war, public indifference, and the conviction, among the young and middle aged people, that the priestesses taught only superstitions (meishin) like the fortune tellers and the soothsayers.

Hanashiro had a priestess before the war; when she died, there was no young female relative to replace her. Now there are none in Hanashiro, Nagamo, or Hinatogawa. Their failure to revive after the war is attributed by the villagers to the influence of education among the people. In Matsuda, there are some last survivals of the system, but the Ginosa priestess has also died, and there was no one to replace her.

793 Before the war, the priestess (noro in Japanese, nuru in Okinawan) and her assistants conducted services in Matsuda.[6] The priestess, who was then about 60, lived in Ginosa village, and was carried by two men on a palanquin (kago) from her village to Matsuda. The high priestess and her assistants constituted a ten woman group. The first in rank after her lived in Ginosa, and the other eight in Matsuda. These participants in the festivals and religious ceremonies were known as kannushi-san (Japanese) or kamichuyu (Okinawan). The priestess was assisted by a second woman, first in rank after the noro herself (uchigami in Okinawan), a third (nigami in Okinawan), and the fourth (yurashigami in Okinawan). The fifth to ninth women were learners and followers. They could be either young or old women. All ranks wore a simple garment, similar in cut to a kimono, made of white gauze-like material. For a head covering, a piece of the same material was wrapped around the head like a towel. Four men attended the priestess and her women assistants but only at public ceremonies.

[115] 6 The material which follows is based on information from a lady about 50, a resident of Matsuda, who was a second ranking assistant (nigami) to the noro. She now operates a tiny store in Matsuda.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

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Chapter 4

Property

Rice paddies, farm land and some grass land, trees on private land, a house site and house, as well as livestock and tools, are owned by the heads of households. Land is registered in the household head's name, and he has sole right to dispose of it. Ordinarily younger sons have no right to their father's property, but a man may will property to them. If there is no will, however, everything reverts to the eldest son. Despite this, several families of younger sons were found to have land holdings equal to those of eldest sons.

A widow with young sons may hold land in trust for her sons or, if there are no male heirs, may inherit the land outright. Divorcees and spinsters may also acquire land by purchase, and there are several women in Taira who are household heads and owners of real estate.

Because of the war and a general shift in population, much land and many house sites have changed owners, and former wealthy families are no longer the largest landowners. When they returned, several families with small prewar land holdings were able to raise the necessary cash to buy land.

There is little sentimental attachment to a particular plot of land, and households have never been associated with particular plots. Rather, land is considered a necessary commodity, and thus it frequently changes hands. This sentiment may derive from the communal land-holding system with its periodic redistribution of plots to individuals, which was found throughout Okinawa until abolished under Japanese administration at the turn of the century.

Forest land from which villagers derive an income is owned by the village. Being a member of the community confers the right to use village forests, subject to regulations made by the village. Of particular interest is the village-owned tea field, which the village cooperative controls. The field has been subdivided, and each household in the

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

worthy that so few women marry before they are twenty and that many marry in their middle and later twenties. For those whose formal education ends at the age of 15 there may, therefore, be an interval of five to ten years until matrimony.*

One might ask whether sibling position affects marriage age, either because first-born must marry first or because of the inheritance pattern, young sons seldom inheriting either a house or land. The record of 59 marriages in central Taira shows no clear pattern in this respect; oldest sons and daughters do not seem to marry earlier more frequently than those in lower ordinal positions. A more plausible explanation for late marriage is that young men tend to spend some time after school outside the community and, prior to the war, even outside the country. The rationale for a period abroad is in part economic, but "wanderlust" or curiosity undoubtedly contribute. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the period between the end of school and marriage is an extremely enjoyable one, for now work and duties are mixed with comradeship and amusements in contrast to the new duties and responsibilities one assumes with marriage and children. This is especially true for women.

The most striking fact concerning Taira marriages is that among the total of 59 unions, 18 wives were older than their husbands. Marriage records from the other parts of Taira reveal the same age discrepancy. In comparison with Western countries, and what we know of most other societies, this discrepancy is unusual. Similar findings were suggested from studies in Japan. Here, however, the explanation seems to be that such marriages tend to occur between a first son and a woman who is older than he because a mature woman is desired to take over responsibilities as an oldest son's wife. In Taira only nine (one half) of the age reversals involve marriages of oldest sons. Since there are 29 first-born males included in the sample of 59, the proportion of age reversal marriages of oldest sons is no greater

* There were no dependable data to indicate whether the present trend toward a relatively late marriage represents a change from a previous pattern. Informants' statements suggest that marriages took place at an earlier age in past times, perhaps prior to the turn of the century. Other references to marriage in Okinawa would support this information. The *Civil Affairs Handbook, Ryukyu Islands*, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1944, states that: "The usual age of marriage as reported in 1925 was 18 or 19 for men, 17 or 18 for women. An analysis of the marriage statistics for 1934, however, indicates that the average age at marriage was about four years older. In 1937, the average was reported as 27 years for men and 24 for women" (page 64). The rapid increase in age between 1925 and 1937 suggested by this source can only be accepted with reservations.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

were justified. Both children were slightly retarded, and people believed that this fact added even more proof. 848

An illegitimate child is loved by everybody and treated like any legitimate child. The bastard's name is listed in the registry under his mother's and his illegitimacy noted. Since World War II the distinguishing red ink mark is no longer used in recording these children. Unless the mother marries the child's real father, the offspring has no legal rights of inheritance. If she marries another man, the child may receive affectionate treatment from the stepfather, but he remains legally her son. Socially such a child does not suffer any form of ostracism, but adults make references to his status within his earshot. One such girl proudly said that people had told her that she was half-Japanese. 837 732 217 428 554

Legally a man cannot have more than one wife, but there are cases of multiple marriage even in Taira. It takes a substantial income for such an arrangement, since a second wife is given a separate place to live. A younger "wife" is usually taken if there is no male heir born by the legal wife or if the marriage remains childless altogether. A man, formerly a resident of the village, took a young concubine late in life after his sons were killed during the war. She bore him a son, apparently with the consent of the first wife, since there was amicable interaction between the two although they lived separately. The husband registers such children as his legal offspring. 595 842

Two modes of divorce are possible. A couple may agree to separate and call a family council of parents and relatives on both sides. The township office is then notified and separation acknowledged. Once children have been born, such divorces are not too frequent, at least there were few cases of divorced women with children in Taira. A husband may initiate a divorce by telling his wife of his desire to separate. Extra-marital relationships of the wife would be sufficient cause, as would be sterility, which is interpreted as her fault. In Taira a settlement within the family is the more frequent mode of divorce although relatively rare. One official estimated that the rate of divorce for the whole township is two per year. Among the 59 marriages we found listings for five subsequent divorces. During fieldwork, many debates about modernizing divorce laws were held among members of the Women's Association, which advocated the abolition of the unilateral emphasis that gave husbands all the rights and wives almost none. Only a crime committed by a man would be sufficient cause under existing law to permit the wife to initiate a divorce. 586 837 842 671 575

162 this may be the result of the war; the southern islands escaped heavy damage and loss of life. The urban area of Naha-Mawashi has a well-balanced sex ratio, and is probably a reflection of the number of men who directly or indirectly are connected with military employment.

The total number of persons per household has not appreciably changed in the fifteen years from 1937 to 1952:

Table Ia

Political Unit	Persons per Household, 1937	Persons per HH, 1952
Okinawa-ken	4.67	4.70
Naha	4.21	4.41
Shuri	4.18	4.17

The loss of men in the war was compensated for by those men who returned from Japan and those who repatriated from the Mandated Islands.

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2. Population Characteristics of a Rural 'Son'

Kochinda-son lies almost in the center of the southern section of Shimajiri. It does not border anywhere on the sea, and is entirely rural in that it has no industries of urban character. It is realized that no one area will be entirely typical of the whole of Okinawa; however, the population dynamics of this 'son' will undoubtedly be reflected in kind, if not in degree, by that of other farming areas. Fishing towns such as Itoman, Henza, Yakena and Yonabaru each probably have special types of adjustments that are not true of Kochinda.

[127] This researcher was permitted to copy the entire 'koseki' (population register) of Kochinda-son. In addition explanatory information was given by the 'son' office personnel when requested. In many cases it was possible to follow up and interview persons cognizant of the details of certain situations.

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• [428] Okinawa still follows the prewar Japanese system of inheritance by
[178] first sons. Under normal conditions in the countryside, the first sons
[179] would inherit the bulk of the farm plots, and second sons would inherit a few plots and set up separate households. Or the second and following sons might go to Naha, Osaka or the south seas to seek employment. The war disrupted this pattern, and it is germane to examine the types and numbers of household heads, as one index of postwar change.

Because the solution of the population problem is a factor in Civil Administration planing for Okinawa, it is of importance to know the fertility ratio and the amount of spacing between births. The Okinawans, like the Japanese, tend to register a marriage after the birth of the first child. This should be quantified if possible. In addition, age at marriage should be known, since it bears a direct relationship to population increase. The number of illegitimate and common law children in the villages indicates

allotment system was now entered in the newly-created land registries as the property of the household head. In the past inheritance of the position of household head by the first son had been largely a matter of status succession involving leadership of the family and certain ceremonial obligations. Property succession had not been an important factor, for the private property of the family had usually amounted to no more than the family house and lot. Under the old land allotment system there was always land available for younger sons who set up independent houses, but under Japanese law the bulk of the family property was inherited by the first son. What had been the function of the community in the past now became the responsibility of the family, and since family holdings were usually small, the younger sons were often landless. Informants stated that a father will usually do everything possible to provide his younger sons with land, but he cannot do this if it means jeopardizing the resources of the house. Continuation of the family line for the purpose of continuity in worshipping the ancestors is the chief responsibility incumbent on the household head, and in the rural areas the land provides the major support for the house. With the rise in population there developed an increasing trend for younger sons to emigrate from the rural areas in search of land or jobs elsewhere. The end result was a considerable weakening of family and especially kin group ties and a rapid decline in the communal character of the rural villages.

175 648 177 423 177 423 428 592 [166] [602] [621]

Though the creation of private property made possible the sale, purchase, and rental of land, landlordism never gained a foothold on Okinawa. Undoubtedly this is primarily due to the recency of private property and the lack of time for large accumulations of land to be made. It is also in part due to a lack of capital in the rural areas; most capital on Okinawa after the annexation and before World War II was confined to the hands of Japanese businessmen and members of the former upper classes who seemed disinclined to invest in land. Likewise the official Japanese attitude toward Okinawa was to regard it as a rather backward part of Japan not to be exploited as a colonial dependency as in the case of Formosa and Korea. Glacken has suggested that the heavy fragmentation of the typical Okinawan farm would be an obstacle to its sale; yet, the Chinese farmland is also highly fragmented and landlordism has been common there for centuries.[1]

175 423 427 [471] [648] [171]

After the abolition of the communal allotment system taxes were extended to cover all categories of land whereas previously they had been applied only to arable land; however, government income from land taxes sharply declined, as the moderate levies of the Japanese administration were considerably below those of the Okinawan monarchy. Despite this reduction in tax load there has been a steady decline in the amount of land cultivated since the termination of the old land system; this is clearly shown in Tables III and IV in Chapter III, Agricultural History, Land Use and Diet.

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3. World War II and the American Occupation

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During World War II Okinawa became the scene of one of the most violent battles of modern times. The entire island was turned into a combat

[1] Glacken, 1951, p. 160.

to take registration seriously until conditions are more stable. The Central Land Office in Naha appears to be almost wholly out of touch with local changes; for example, the extensive land changes subsequently described for Kitazato did not appear to be known or recorded on the maps in that office. 423 647

Taxation of farm lands is a very complex matter. Land assessments are made by the district land office in conjunction with village leaders; consequently, there is not only some variation in grading from 'son' to 'son' but also from village to village within the same 'son'. All land is divided into six categories: 1) rice lands or irrigated fields, 2) farm land or dry fields, 3) grass land or meadow (often erroneously translated as wasteland), 4) forest, 5) house or building land, and 6) miscellaneous, including graves, ponds, etc. It will be noted that only the first two categories are food-producing. The first five categories are sub-divided into grades depending on a variety of factors such as fertility, accessibility, availability of water, etc. In Kami Motobu-son there are sixteen grades of land within the five graded categories; thus, there are five grades of rice land, five grades of dry field, two grades of grass land, two grades of forest land, and two grades of house land. The tax is computed by the tax rate per grade of category times the area in 'tsubo' (1224 'tsubo' equal one acre). In Kami Motobu-son grade one dry fields carry an annual tax of 15 'sen' per tsubo; therefore, at current exchange rates (¥120 equal $1.00) a house would pay a tax of $1.53 (¥183.60) for an acre of this grade one land. 651 423

In regard to the matter of property inheritance there is some dissatisfaction with the present laws on the part of educated Okinawans. They feel that the new Japanese constitution adopted during the American Occupation should also be enacted for the Ryukyus. The constitutional reform which took place in Japan after the war did not apply to the Ryukyus; consequently, Okinawa still operates under the old Japanese civil code except for certain gross inequities which have been corrected by military government proclamation. The new Japanese law holds that all children, regardless of sex or birth order, are entitled to an equal share of the parents' estate. In contrast, the old law, which still obtains on Okinawa, grants the bulk of the estate to the first-born son. Under this law property in reality is held for the family by the first son or household head; it is not his to dispose of as he sees fit. Educated Okinawans who discussed this subject with the author expressed the opinion that the old law was undemocratic in giving emphasis to the family over the individual, and they felt that Okinawa should keep pace with Japan in this respect. It should be emphasized, however, that these persons were not farmers; the latter, most of whom are not too well educated, tend to regard the present laws as just, since the emphasis is on preserving the continuity of the family. A further subdivision of the typical Okinawan farm into still more fragmented plots would do little to improve the prosperity of the rural areas. 428 829 [642] [423] 423 829 184

Within the village there are no class differences. Considerable prestige continues to be accorded certain occupations---teacher, doctor, government official. Land ownership does not appear to be an important status factor, and there is no landlord class. 621 554

Family The Okinawan family system has been in a process of change for over fifty years. Abolition of the system of communal land tenure and the introduction of private property and Japanese laws of inheritance provided the first shock. The bulk of the estate was hereafter conferred upon the first son while younger sons were frequently landless; consequently, many left the village in search of livelihood elsewhere. Where formerly the kin group was concentrated in a given locality, now its members are often scattered about, making interaction infrequent. A gradual decline in the practice of kin group endogamy also has contributed to weakening the solidarity of the kin group. There seems to be an increasing trend for large kin groups to fragment into smaller segments. According to young people who were consulted on the subject, their generation has little interest in kin group affairs; this may be misleading, as it is chiefly a matter which occupies the attention of older people. Perhaps one young man stated the situation accurately when he said, "I have no interest in such matters now, but I suppose I will when I am past forty." 593 178 [423] [428] 61 178

Many families were shattered by the war, and in the postwar period there has been a weakening of the family due to a variety of factors which might best be described as growing individualism. One factor, noted previously, was an increasing tendency for members of the household to maintain separate purses where formerly all earnings were turned over to the head of the house. There is some sentiment among the more educated for changing existing inheritance laws in favor of equal shares for all heirs regardless of sex or birth order. The author also heard complaints that young people often run off to seek lucrative jobs elsewhere unmindful of their family obligations. 593 178

Marriage In contrast to the prewar period when most marriages were arranged, the young people today claim that they will marry someone of their own choice. This seems to be generally true, but often the parents will go through the process of arranging after the young people have decided. Young people also will vehemently deny that they will make use of a fortune teller to determine the most propitious day, but their mothers most likely will do this and then will exert their influence for the proper day. In all likelihood the young people will accept in order not to displease the parents. 584 178 [585]

If a person, particularly a young woman, delays too long in becoming married, the family will arrange a match. In one such case known to the author a well-educated woman of twenty-five who had financial independence as a school teacher was urged into a match much against her own feelings. She explained her compliance as obligation to her family for having provided her with an excellent education.

Pitts' population studies indicate that the average age of marriage has dropped slightly in the postwar period due to the fact that Okinawan men are no longer delayed by military service. Despite this slight drop in the 582 178